

DRAFT

Governor's Blue Ribbon Water Task Force

Meeting Notes
May 26-27, 2004
Albuquerque, NM

Attendees: Brian Burnett, John D'Antonio, Estevan Lopez, Anne Watkins, Conci Bokum, Wayne Cunningham, Peter Davies, Louis Gariano, Eileen Grevey Hillson, Steve Hernandez, Sarah Kotchian, Elmer Lincoln, Paul Paryski, Elmer Salazar, Bob Vocke, and Jack Westman attended the meeting. Additional attendees included NMED Secretary, Ron Curry and Ana Marie Ortiz, Director of the NMED Field Operations Division.

The next meeting of the BRWTF will be June 23-24 in Santa Fe.

The following points were made during discussions with Secretary Curry and Ana Marie:

- There has been substantial cooperation among state agencies during the Richardson administration e.g., OSE/ISC and NMED;
- NMED is making progress in dealing with environmental cleanup and stream impairment at LANL and elsewhere in NM;
- NMED is pursuing primacy by 2006 for NPDES (NMED now acts as an EPA contractor and enforcement is done by EPA Region 6);
- NMED was under funded to primacy for NPDES during the past few years (8-12 FTEs need for permitting);
- HB 19 in the last legislative session provided funding to fully staff NMED's 10% vacancy rate of 50-55 FTEs;
- NMED funding comes from fees, grants, and 1/3 from the general fund;
- NMED will employ some 50 summer interns to conduct field work this summer (includes mapping of septic systems);
- The Environmental Improvement Board is rewriting the wastewater regulations (advanced septic systems will be required under certain conditions [e.g., lot size and proximity to water supplies], grand fathering of vacant lots will be addressed, certification will be addressed, septic system maintenance will be addressed, and legislation will be required to address some issues);
- There are some 220,000 septic systems in NM and many threaten water quality;
- There are some 15,000-25,000 open cesspools (a majority of these are 50-60 miles north of the border with Mexico);
- Field offices are testing well water using Hach Kits;
- NMED has primacy for the SDWA 1996 Amendments;
- Many public water systems (50% of small systems) don't have certified operators, which is a violation of SDWA Amendments;
- NMED provides technical assistance/oversight for small systems;
- NMED maintains a sampling program using the Water Conservation Fee Fund (over 70 constituents are monitored);
- NMED has 1 enforcement coordinator for the entire state – compliance orders have been issued, by no penalties;
- The Source Water Assessment and Protection Program Phase 1 will be completed soon and systems must adopt protection programs during Phase 2;
- Consumer confidence reports are required for all systems on an annual basis – this is not being done;
- Co-location of drinking water supplies and septic systems is an issue;
- Funding of the NM's drinking water infrastructure is an issue;
- Water quality should be elevated in the SWP;

- NMED provides recommendations for water utilities to guard against terrorist and security threats; and
- Regional water and wastewater systems are being discussed in many areas of NM for long-term sustainability.

The Task Force discussed OSE/ISC funding challenges and crafting a message for the upcoming legislative session. Peter Davies will document this discussion.

Notes are not available from Task Force discussions on 5/27.